

William Somner
The antiquities of Canterbury (frontispiece)
London
1640

Somner's book is illustrated with three fold-out plates. None of them gives the engraver's or publisher's name.

facing page 1 – THE MAPP OF CANTERBURY. A bird's-eye view of the city, copied exactly from the inset plan in John Speed's map of Kent (1611). The peripheral elements have been rearranged, and two more coats of arms (archbishop Laud and Christ Church) have been inserted in suitable spaces. In the panel containing the legend, Speed's 'Maiden lane' has been corrected to 'Mead lane' (see page 101). At the bottom, an instruction to the binder: 'place this just before pag. 1.'

facing page 47 – A schematic plan of the altars and tombs in Saint Augustine's abbey church. Copied from a fifteenth-century manuscript, Cambridge, Trinity Hall 1, fo. 77r (a modern reproduction of which can be found in 'English Heritage Book of St Augustine's Abbey Canterbury' (1997), colour plate 1). These comments by Somner appear in the upper corners:

(top left)

This Map representing the high altar at S/t. Austins, with the Chapells about it, as they stood together 200 yeares ago and upwards, was taken from an ancient faire Ms. sometime belonging to that Abbey, and procured to me by my worthy friend D/r. Casaubon.

(continued top right)

Chapells I call them; not in the Moderne notion of Chapells; but in that sence wherein w/th the ancients they betokened Chests, Shrines, or the like enclosure/s for S/ts. Reliques: for such I conceive were these; and the rather, because they are here sett out w/th the high altar, about w/ch they were placed.

A similar plate occurs in the first volume of the 'Monasticon Anglicanum' (1655), facing page 23. It is not the same as Somner's plate, but was, I think, quite certainly copied from that, not from the manuscript in Cambridge. The 'Monasticon' plate was reused for the second edition of volume 1 (1682), and then again for Battely's new edition of Somner's book (1703).

facing page 181 – The new font in Canterbury Cathedral, donated by John Warner, bishop of Rochester. 'This Font was giuen / consecrated by the right reverend father in God, John L/d. Bishop of Rochester / Oxford this present yeare, 1639.'

C.F. January 2011.